



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

July 21, 2023

Tautog Technical Committee (TC) Meeting Summary

TC Attendees: Craig Weedon (MD, Chair), Sam Truesdell (MA, Vice Chair), Lindy Barry (NJ), Sandra Dumais (NY), Josh McGilly (VA), Dave Ellis (CT), and Coly Ares (RI)

Staff: James Boyle and Katie Drew

Other Attendees: Rachel Sysak (NY DEC)

The Commission's Tautog Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call on Friday, July 21st, to review the results of the NY feasibility study on alternative commercial tag types and placements.

Background

The purpose of this Technical Committee meeting was the continued discussion of reported live market fish quality and mortality issues presumably associated with the commercial tagging requirements. During the previous Technical Committee meeting on May 16th, the TC discussed the recent Policy Board approval for NY to tag tautog in various locations on the fish for the commercial season, and to conduct tagging experiments with different tags.

Review NY Feasibility Study Results

Rachel Sysak presented the findings of the experiments, which focused on three different tag types: the current commercial tag from National Band and Tag (NBT), a smaller version of the commercial tag from the same supplier, and a cinch tag purchased from Floy Tag and Manufacturing. Additionally, three tagging locations were considered: the base of the caudal fin, the dorsal fin rays, and the flesh just below the caudal fin rays. The study was done on a sample of 10 fish, with all 10 receiving the cinch tag and the others receiving different combinations of national band tags in the caudal peduncle and fin rays. The fish were held for 15 days in a cage anchored to a dock at a marine pier. The results of the study showed that all of the tag treatments resulted in damage that was equal to greater than the current tagging system. NY recommended that the smaller version of the NBT tag be evaluated for further consideration. After discussing potential methods to reduce the unique characters needed on each tag, the TC is recommending that the Board consider tasking the TC with evaluating the feasibility of converting to the smaller tag. If feasible, NY plans to conduct a study with industry to evaluate the effectiveness of the tag in current commercial holding tanks to be presented to the Board at the Annual Meeting.